

AND SO IT ALL ENDS

Nicholas Gebhardt

And so it all ends, out there, at the edge of town, on the highway...

Silence. Still. A pause, before the shouting, the accusations, the attempts to find a way back...but back to where?

Some walk away, others just stand there, scared, waiting to see. It's easy, just then, to lose sight of what went before.

Two kinds of past, two times only seeming to be, ready-made out of songs only heard once before, or barely heard at all, or missed altogether, and for no other reason: larger than life but smaller than a thought but still...slight in-breath...

"What happened out there?" they asked. The dull pulse of the engine, containing and contained, and below, snaking outwards...the road, a car, getting smaller and smaller, and knowing once and for all that what takes place now is longer possible to change.

"We live in a constellation
Of patches and of pitches,
Not in a single world,
In things said well in music,
On the piano, and in speech,
As in a page of poetry—
Thinkers without final thoughts
In an always incipient cosmos
The way, when we climb a mountain
Vermont throws itself together."

Differences in being and having been.

Figures and phrases a-wash in the midsummer frenzy... "There's a guy looking for you."

Talk of leaving and trying to understand what happened, what happens next...of who's connected to whom? A vision. On 4th street. Hot pursuit. Some innocence.

The edge of the end of the night, two kinds of past, two times, now colliding now, flames and smoke and confusion... "Don't say a word, don't ask me anything..."

Songs about and songs that trace out and songs that move within the arc of displacement, more disappointment than you can imagine...an elegy. Others, light and young and living and not part of anything. Could this work out?

Moments lost to the future, because...

"Turn it up!"

Edge living, like in-dwelling, requires time, patience, a sense of humour, even when...

Searching for something unforeseen, in-caught and out-ridden...fly-by-night. California dreaming... "The ordinary throws itself together out of forms, flows, powers, pleasures, encounters, distractions, drudgery, denials, practical solutions, shape-shifting forms of violence, daydreams, and opportunities lost or found... Or it falters, fails."

The highway, "that's OUR vision. Ours!" Vision of a frontier, perhaps, stretched, and stretching out... no time to ask what might happen, already gone, already in motion, absolute, indefinite, defiant but desperate...a monument to platitudes and prototypes and places dreamed of but not yet seen...

Maybe never.

GO.

The highway. End world, limit world, line out, pathway, straight story, going nowhere, dead end, point of no return. The highway. Nothingness and being. No rules, only speed, traversal, space, light, memory loss, suspended for a split second, then gone.... The highway. Teenage muse, song-maker, end of the line, spirit measure, connecting here and there, passing over... Caught up always and every-ways in "swirls of being."

That voice, way out in the blue, horizon-filled, trying to recover the lostness of last things...heard it all before, or so it seemed. "Have a popsicle."

Who is speaking to whom? "Go on, have a popsicle."

Crossing over many times, passwords, signals, tension rising, edge work is hard work, is only a matter of timing. Who knows what happened out there, who even remembers, now? Names, faces, small talk, just sitting, waiting for them to call. All Gone.

"To be listening is always to be on the edge of meaning."

To be...listen. Pause.

“Today the air is clear of everything
It has no knowledge except nothingness
And it flows over us without meanings,
As if none of us had ever been here before
And are not now: in this shallow spectacle,
This invisible activity, this sense.”

[with thanks to Wallace Stevens, Kathleen Stewart, Jean-Luc Nancy, KT Tunstall, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty]

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